

# Creating Transit Oriented Communities



**Defining TOD.** Often called TOD for short, Transit Oriented Development is development that occurs within a half-mile of a transit stop, is linked to a network of bikeable/walkable streets, and contains a rich mix of uses – shopping, housing, jobs. Because transit performs better with more riders, and living in a TOD reduces the need for driving, buildings located near transit should have more housing or office units and fewer parking spaces than similar buildings in other areas of a region.

**TOD provides mobility choices.** By creating walkable mixed-use neighborhoods with higher-density mixed-income housing near transit, people are able to have access to jobs, shops, school, recreation and culture by walking, biking and taking transit. These transportation options are especially helpful for young people and the elderly, and for those who cannot or who choose not to drive.



**Successful, high-performance TOD requires partnerships.** Creating transit oriented communities is a journey that involves a complex and dynamic set of stakeholders: community residents, local businesses, private developers, non-profit community development organizations, public agencies, planners, architects, engineers, and many others. TOD can be a catalyst for building, or rebuilding vibrant communities. Achieving that requires vision, leadership and partnership.



## Potential Benefits from TOD

- Higher transit use minimizes traffic and air pollution.
- Residents living near transit stations are five times as likely to use transit and people who work near transit stations are 3.5 times as likely to use transit.
- While the average U.S. household owns 1.6 cars, the average TOD household owns just 0.9 cars. Reduced auto use can mean an annual household savings of \$4,000-\$10,000.
- Transit oriented neighborhoods are healthier places in which to live because people walk and bike more regularly.
- Walkable higher-density transit-oriented neighborhoods are safer because they typically have more public plazas and parks and are active places that are filled with people throughout the day and evening.



### **Creating Community Value**

Increased density near transit can provide value that can be directed toward maintaining affordability and providing public amenities like parks and plazas. Transit-oriented communities can be a key tool for building mixed income housing.

The premium that people are willing to pay for upper stories with dramatic views is considerable: in one project in Boston space on floors 2-10 was worth about \$600 per square foot, space on floors 12-25 was worth \$800 per square foot, and floor 20 and above was worth \$1100 per square foot. The top five floors of this 25-story building paid for affordable units, a small park, ground water recharge and other amenities for the neighborhood.



**The high cost of free parking.** Because higher densities and lower parking standards are typically permitted in TOD projects, these attributes can allow affordable housing to pencil out better for

developers. Developers may pay between \$20,000 to \$75,000 on just one parking space in a parking structure, lower parking ratios significantly reduce the cost of housing projects and these savings can be passed on to residents and help ensure affordability.

TOD helps support the public investment in transit by providing riders; riders who are likely to eat, shop, live and work in the neighborhood around stations. That creates more local economic development and job creation opportunities.

**Mixed-use transit-oriented neighborhoods provide a higher quality of life** because they are safe. They typically offer a range of housing choices, from small studios to luxury high-rise condos, thereby providing for a mix of incomes and age groups. They provide transportation options and are healthier because they encourage more active lifestyles. TOD can provide a greater sense of community because there is typically more public space where people can interact. Because people don't have to own as many cars transit oriented communities can provide for much more affordable lifestyles.



**For more information on TOD and creating Transit Oriented Communities, visit our website at [www.ReconnectingAmerica.org](http://www.ReconnectingAmerica.org) or call 510-268-8602.**

